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Miscellanea.

It was Durandus who held that no priest was worthy

the Passover. of the name who had not the "Computatio Paschalis" at his fingers' ends, so important was it considered then to be able to determine the date of Easter and the dependent feasts.

It is not of less importance in our own time; but although there can be no difference of opinion now as to the moment when the Paschal festival falls due, it is not unusual to hear questions asked as to the exact date. "When will Easter be this year?" is a common question with the laity, and it is surprising how comparatively few are able to answer it off hand. Yet, Easter is the centre-point of the ecclesiastical year. All the movable feasts from that of the Prayer of Jesus in the

Garden, celebrated on the first Tuesday after Septuagesima Sunday, to that of the Sacred Heart, on the first Friday after the octave of Corpus Christi, depend for their date on the date of Easter. The connection between the Jewish and the Christian Pasch accounts for the movable character of the feast. Easter has no fixed date, because the 15th of Nisan of the Semitic calendar shifted from date to date on the Julian calendar. Nisan commemorates the deliverance of the Hebrews from the bondage of Egypt, and coincides, approximately, with the month of April.

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Apart altogether from the Jewish feast, the Christians would, of course, have celebrated the Resurrection. But for this it was necessary to know the date of Christ's death; a very simple matter for the Jews, for it was the day after the 14th of their first month, that is to say, the 15th of Nisan. Other nations had other systems of chronology, as, for instance, the Romans who had used the Julian calendar since 45 B.C. These various systems depended on the solar year, whereas the Jewish calendar was founded on the lunar year of 354 days. It was, therefore, impossible that the first days of the Jewish months and years could coincide with any fixed day of the Roman system. The first Sunday after the 14th Nisan being the historical day of the Resurrection became the Christian feast of Easter at Rome, and was eventually recognised as such by the whole Catholic world.

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It was at one time proposed, in order to escape the difficulties of the Paschal computation, to assign Easter to a fixed date on the Roman calendar; celebrating the death of Christ on the 25th of March, a date regarded in the third century as that of the Crucifixion, and His Resurrection on the 27th of March. Indeed, for centuries scientists and others have exerted themselves in favour of a simplification of the Paschal computation. Some have even proposed to put every Sunday to a certain day of the month, by making New Year's Day always a Sunday. In this connection it is important to remember that the solution adopted by the Nicene Council in 525, as well as that put forward at the time of the reform of the calendar by Pope Gregory the

Thirteenth, with regard to the determination of Easter, was primarily a matter of ecclesiastical discipline and not of astronomical science. Nor, it should be needless to say, is the moon according to which Easter is calculated the moon in the heavens, nor even the mean moon of the astronomers, but the calendar moon. By making the date of Easter depend on this admittedly fictitious moon a uniformity in the celebration of the festival is secured for the whole world. It seems singularly appropriate that the period of the vernal equinox, the 21st of March, and the commencement of the ecclesiastical year should be identical, and that the Paschal full moon should be that which happens upon, or next after, that date. And to bear in mind that this is the case will simplify the calculation of Easter for most people; for the vernal or spring equinox is the moment of the resurrection of nature from the ice-bound tomb of winter, and Easter, which is regulated by it, is the festival of the Resurrection of the Lord of Creation. Easter always falls on the first Sunday after the Paschal full moon; but should that moon happen upon a Sunday, then Easter is celebrated upon the Sunday following.

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The object of this last-mentioned regulation was to lessen the likelihood of Christians and Jews celebrating the Passover in common. In spite of every precaution the Christian and Jewish celebrations have clashed however, and during the present century will do so three times; that is to say, on the 1st of April, 1923; the 17th of April, 1927; and the 19th of April, 1981. The Jewish festival never occurs in Passion week, nor before the 26th of March, nor later than the 25th of April. The earliest possible date for Easter is the 22nd of March, and the latest the 25th of April. It will fall on the 25th April in 1943. The "Pascha," or "Passover," of the early Christians corresponded to the eve of the Jewish Passover. In parts of Germany Eastern is even now called Paisken, not Ostern, and in some countries the word is identified with "solemnity" and extended to other feasts. In Spain and Italy Palm Sunday is often spoken of as Pasqua florida, Pentecost as Pascua de Pentecostes, Christmas as Pascua de la Nativida, and the Epiphany as Pascua de Epifania; while in some parts of France, First Communions are called Paques, no matter at what season of the year they may take place.

The egg, as a symbol of the renewal of life, is of great antiquity. The Hebrews associated it with the human race, of which they regarded Noah and his family, shut up in the ark, as if in an egg, as a type. They also considered the

egg as a symbol of their passage through the Red Sea, and entrance, by it, to a new life, and it was for this reason that an egg figured as "a free-will offering" at their feast of the Passover. In ancient India the egg appears in the fable of the god Vishnu, who, once in a cycle of ages, encloses all the world with him in an egg that floats on the ocean of Eternity till the moment comes for him to reproduce himself and all creation with him. In Egypt the symbol of the universe is a winged egg. The distribution of red eggs forms part of the ceremonies attending the spring festival of the Parsees. In the Tyrol bands of musicians march through the country singing Easter hymns, followed by a crowd of children carrying lighted torches and little baskets. When the singers pass a house or village, the good wives come out and fill the baskets with brilliantly coloured eggs, whose shells are often inscribed with seasonable mottoes. The egg was one of the sacred symbols of the Druids, once all-powerful in Ireland. The rabbit, which is said to lay the Easter egg, is also a pagan symbol and the emblem of fertility. In Germany the hare replaces the rabbit, and the children hunt in the garden at Easter for "hare-eggs." One of the reasons given for Easter eggs being coloured red is, that red is a sign of joy, and people wanted to show their satisfaction at being free to eat again what was formerly a forbidden article of diet during Lent. The red may also be connected with the colour of the rising sun, sacred to Easter. Children are told that Easter eggs come from Rome on Holy Thursday, with the Easter bells, which return there on Saturday. Gift eggs are often of great value, inside and outside; being frequently made of some costly material and filled with expensive presents. As symbolic of a new creation, or regeneration, of mankind, by reason of the death of Christ, the egg is sometimes blessed and kept from one Easter to another.

The sun is said to take three leaps when rising on Easter morning, and, from time immemorial, people leapt, or danced in honour of the idea. An old Irish poem says:—

No sun upon an Easter Day
Is half so fine a sight."

Ball-playing was also connected with the triple leaping of the sun at Easter, the ball being supposed to represent the sun. In Ireland, as elsewhere, the circular dance in honour of the sun was derived from the East, and an Irish cycle of the sun, or anniversary, was called an Aonach. This is pronounced Enoch, and, curiously enough, the days of Enoch are said to have been three-hundred and sixty-five years.

In pagan times the lighting of a fire on a mountain top

by means of sparks drawn from the friction of two pieces of wood, after all other fires had been extinguished, signified the victory of spring over winter, and was common

throughout Europe. The new fire enkindled on Holy Saturday is struck from flint, and symbolises the Resurrection of the Light of the World from the tomb closed by a stone. In some places on the Rhine, as well as in the Tyrol and Bohemia, a life-sized figure, popularly christened "Judas," was thrown into the Easter fire by the people. A somewhat similar custom in other places, and obviously a relic of pagan times, was the casting into the flames of a figure intended to represent departed winter.

THE Irish people have had a long struggle to safeguard

the religion of their children owing to the insidious attempts that have been made from time to time to set up Godless schools. The Education Bill, now before Parliament, is

The Education Bill another effort in this direction, and the Bishops of Ireland have given it their solemn condemnation. "Considering the interests at stake," writes Cardinal Logue, "not merely the temporal, but eternal interests of generations of the children of Ireland, I believe this Bill should be resisted by all the legitimate means at our disposal." This pronouncement should prove the death-knell of a measure which is so inimical to Catholic education, and opposed to the feelings of all Irishmen worthy of the name.

Our best wishes go with that gallant band of Irish
Missionaries who have left St.
Columban's College, Dalgan Park,
Galway, to preach the Gospel in
distant China. Animated by the
apostolic spirit, and regardless of
the sacrifices that they may be called upon to make,
these noble Irish priests have left home and country
in order to win souls to Christ in the land of the
heathen. May the courage, self-denial and Faith of
these missionaries result in an abundant harvest of
souls.

* * *

From the various Provinces of the Passionist Congregation throughout the world re The presentatives will journey to Rome Canonisation for the Canonisation of Blessed of Blessed Gabriel, on 13th May. It will be Gabriel. a red-letter day in the annals of the Congregation founded by St. Paul of the Cross, and all Christendom will rejoice and be glad when in the great Basilica, consecrated to the Prince of the Apostles, Blessed Gabriel, Passionist, and Blessed Margaret Mary, promoter of devotion to the Sacred Heart, will be solemnly declared saints of the Church Universal.

Irish Saints and Irish Boys.

BY HELENA CONCANNON, M.A.

T has always been the belief of our people that it was the "cries of the children of the wood of Fochlart by the Western Sea '' that called Patrick back from all the dear delights of home and kindred in his regained patria to the land where, as a poor little slave boy, he had known nothing but privation and wretchedness, long days of hunger and hardship and unremitting labour under a stern master; long, lonely nights of cold and misery, guarding his flock on the bleak, snow-mantled mountain slopes. If this belief receives no confirmation from the Saint's own words in his Confession, it is, nevertheless, true—and true with a truth more living than that of mere literal accuracy. How dear to Patrick Irish children were many incidents in his years of missionary labour in Ireland show. And it was, under God, mainly because he himself had so great a power over the generous hearts of Irish boys that his mission had such a speedy success. The cause which enlists the boys of Ireland never fails.

One of the earliest of St. Patrick's Irish boy friends was young Benen, son of a chieftain called Seschen, at whose dún in Meath the Saint and his little band of attendant missioners were hospitably entertained soon after their arrival in Ireland. The holy man preached the faith to Seschen and his wife and children and dependents, and before he left their hospitable abode had the great joy of receiving them into the one true fold. Then, wearied out after his great labours, he lay down to rest on the sweet, green sward. Presently, he fell asleep, and those who watched his slumbers saw a little boy approach him with arms full of fragrant blossoms. The white robe of his baptism was still upon the boy, and the sun shone on his fair head and on the lovely flower-load he carried in his strong, young arms and against his pure and ardent heart. The watchers would fain have prevented the lad when they saw him scatter the flower petals over the bosom of the sleeping saint, and kiss his feet, for they feared his rest might

be broken. But Patrick awoke, saying: "He shall be the heir of my kingdom," which, in the light of after events, was interpreted to mean that he was to succeed St. Patrick himself in the primatial See of Armagh. So they let the boy continue his ministry of love. And it was well. For do not we, looking back across the centuries on that exquisite scene, recognise that something more than a tender and gracious idyll was being played there under the spring sunshine on the green banks of Inbher Nainge? It was the boyhood of Ireland, stainless and chivalrous and true, that, in the person of the white-robed Benen, was offering its fealty, its love, the odorous blossoms of a thousand acts of sacrifice (to be offered by Irish boys through all the ages of persecution) to St. Patrick and the One True Church, to which Patrick's labours were to win Ireland for ever.

On the morrow St. Patrick prepared to take his leave of Seschen and his household. His chariot was waiting at the gate of the dún, and, as the old story in the Book of Armagh quaintly relates, the Saint was ready to step into it, having one foot on the ground and one in the chariot. Then there was a little stir among the group who had gathered to speak a blessing to the holy man and his companions ere they started on their journey, and the Saint felt the foot he had still on the ground firmly grasped by two sturdy, boyish hands, and he heard a boy's voice clear and sweet crying out, "Oh, let me go with Patrick my father." There was no refusing Benen's prayer; so Seschen and his wife must needs let their boy go from them in Patrick's chariot; and whether they ever saw their son again the old books do not relate.

On the other hand, they tell much of Benen's life with St. Patrick, of his studies in preparation for the priesthood, of the exquisite music of his voice as it chanted the sacred psalms, of his constant journeyings with the Saint, and the missionary tasks, the errands of mercy, the latter deputed to him. Always around the radiant figure of Benen (or Benignus), whether as youth, as young priest, as young bishop, there shines the same light of poetry and romance in which we first discover his white-clad boyish form. The author of the *Tripartite* has left us a charming portrait of him:

"A youth most fair to look upon, modest of countenance, pure and stainless, in deed as in name, Benignus,

ravishing with his voice the hearts of all."

St. Benignus was the son of an ancient and noble house. But St. Patrick soon made another boy friend belonging to a different rank; and it is one of the most delightful object lessons in that true democracy for which our Church stands, to see how swine-herd and noble foregathered on an equal footing beneath his fostering care. The memory of his own boyhood—of the hungry days he spent herding his master's sheep amid "the silence of the lonely hills," of the cruel nights of frost and snow and storm—must have been very vivid in the Saint's mind when on one of his missionary journeys he came across a little swineherd called Mochua (or Mochae), he broke his journey to stay with the boy for a time, and to teach him the elements of the faith. So quick was the lad to learn that after his baptism Patrick determined to train him for the priesthood. He taught him to read, therefore, and set him to work at the mediæval schoolboy's first task, the learning of the Psalter. The old books relate that Mochae mastered this in a month. Then Patrick passed on, leaving his pupil the Gospels to read. When his missionary labours again led him to the place where Mochae was, a wonderful miracle, we are told, determined the Saint to obtain the boy's liberation, and to take him under his own permanent care. And so Benen and Mochae shared each other's studies, and advanced in saintliness, each aided by the other.

Many other little boys did St. Patrick gather around him, or entrust for instruction to his disciples, as the years went by. There was young Loman, whose mother Richella, brought him one day to the Saint as he passed her home in his chariot, with a request that Patrick should bless him and have him instructed for the priest-hood. (Here we witness a scene that was to be repeated times unnumbered through all the centuries yet to be the Irish mother making known the dearest wish of her heart, to see her son a priest of God.) Richella's prayer was heard, and her boy, Loman, was entrusted to the care of a holy priest called Cassan, whom Patrick had recently established in a little church near Donaghmore (Co. Meath). He made even quicker pro-

gress in his lessons than young Mochay, if we are to believe Jocelyn's account, which credits him with learn-

ing the Psalter in a fortnight.

It was as a new-born babe that little Prince Cormac, son of Prince Enda, and nephew of the High King Laoghaire, was dedicated under the care of St. Patrick, to the service of the Most High. When he was old enough to be taken from his foster-mother he was put under the charge of four tutors, a great tract of land was assigned to him, a church was built, and in this, his patrimony, Cormac lived—and died—after his consecration as bishop of the territory.

Very often the old books, in which these stories are gathered up, show us the boys redeeming by a noble courtesy and generosity the churlishness of their seniors. It matters not whether these boys were princes or peasants—they were all alike in their eager readiness to serve the Saint. It is thus we meet Nessan, probably a farmer's son, accompanied by his mother, carrying a cooked wedder in a basket as an offering tohis chieftain's board. Patrick, anxious to entertain some poor strolling players, begged for the wedder, but Nessan's mother, for fear of the king, refused. Nessan, however, gave the food "to save the saint's honour," and, in return, Patrick obtained for him the grace to follow in his own saintly footsteps. "He baptised him, ordained him deacon, and founded for him a church at the place now called Mungret." The punishment meted out to the mother has a pathos of its own. She was to be deprived of the privilege of "awaiting the Resurrection' in the consecrated ground around her son's church, "and the sound of his bell was never to reach her grave."

Here is a charming story concerning some youthful fishermen, and how their kindness to the saint was rewarded. The Apostle had come in his journeyings to the Duff river—then "abounding in fish." He asked the fishermen he met there to give him and his companions some fish out of the heavy catch, with which their nets were laden. They refused, in churlish and most selfish fashion. Then the Saint and his friends proceeded to the Drowes river—and here they found a number of little boys busy with rod and line. Very scanty had been their catch; but scanty as it was, they

were only too happy to offer what they had taken to St. Patrick. As a reward, the holy men pronounced a blessing on the Drowes, and he promised that, in memory of the little boys who had done him and his a great kindness, no other little boy should ever fish in the Drowse in vain.

The Duff and the Drowse form portion of the boundaries of Tir Conaill, "the land of Conall," and as we pass them, thus, in Patrick's saintly company we are brought face to face, with the knightly figure of Prince Conall himself. Like the peasant youth, Nessan, and the little fisher lads of the Drowse, the heart of this young prince had gone forth to Patrick at first sight, and it was his ardent wish to lay aside the burden of his royal rank, and study for the priesthood. He made known his desire to Patrick. But Patrick told him that it was as a soldier not as a priest Christ wanted him to serve Him; and he took his pastoral staff in his hand, and with the sharp end of it he engraved on Conall's shield a Cross. That Cross, with the message of victory which is written around it—In Hoc Signo Vinces—was graven on the escutcheon of all Conall's famous descendants, the O'Donnells; and it is cut upon the flagstone under which Ruairi and Cathbar, brothers of Aodh Ruadh, were laid to await the Resurrection "in the mound whereon the martyred saint was crucified." Because of that "sign," and because of his knowledge that Ireland has always been true to the Cross, each Irish pilgrim rises from his prayer by that historic tomb with a great hope, sweetening the sorrow in his heart. He knows that Ireland has won the right to interpret the message, as addressed to herself, "In Hoc Signo Vinces."

Aubrey de Vere has seen in the graving of the Cross on Prince Conall's shield the "Inauguration of Irish Chivalry," and has celebrated it in exquisite verse, which every Irish boy should know:—

"Thou shalt not be a Priest," he said;
"Christ has for thee a lowlier task.
Be thou His soldier! Wear with dread
His Cross upon thy shield and casque!
Put on God's armour, faithful knight!
Mercy with justice, love with law,
Nor e'er, except for truth and right,
Thy sword, cross-hilted, dare to draw."

He spoke, and with his crozier pointed
Graver on the broad shield's brazen boss
(That hour baptized, confirmed, anointed,
Stood Erin's chivalry) the Cross.
And there was heard a whisper low—
Prince of God's armies, was it thine?

"Thou sword, keep pure thy virgin vow,
And trenchant shalt thou be as mine!"

THE PRECIOUS BLOOD.

HEN high on Calvary's Mount His life-blood fell,
Redemption's star shone out amidst the gloom.

From Heaven's dome God thunders forth His Knell;
The dead arise, and come forth from the tomb.

Beneath that saving stream doth sin efface,

Each soul is cleansed with His Most Precious Blood,

And all around doth breathe of pardon, grace,

On Calvary's Mount, where God's own Mother stood.

Blest treasure that enriches life's brief span,
Sweet source, which leads the soul to Heaven's gate,
Aye, every crimson ripple shed for man,
Doth purify and purge and elevate.

Ocean divine, fountain of love most pure, Enrich our souls, incline our hearts to Thine, Oh! joy of seraphs! grant that we endure Those burdens, trials which lead to paths divine.

Most Precious Blood, come gladden at this hour Fair Reisin Dhu. whose trust is in her God; Blood of the Lamb of God, all-healing power, Let Freedom's Star illume our emerald sod!

ISABEL BURKE.

An Impression of London.

By REV. H. E. G. ROPE, M.A.

Por over three years I had not seen London, and had been well content to die in that privation. To me its influence has been these many years one of repulsion, not attraction. In childhood, indeed, it held for me two pleasures—the Zoological Gardens and a ride on the top of an omnibus, a real omnibus, not the vibrant petrolleys of to-day, with a genial old driver to talk to. But the "eighties" are far away in another epoch.

"King Pardion, he is dead."

Monday's post (March 1) brought me tidings that a very dear friend, an elderly Irish priest, was dying in Milbank Hospital. I set out to walk the six miles to Craven Arms, and let myself be—the phrase is Ruskin's—"dragged behind a kettle" to "streaming London's central row" (so Tennyson could speak already in 1850). The sun shone out over the pleasant, but uninspiring Midlands, once the tentacles of Birmingham were left behind. Truly Birmingham and Joseph Chamberlain were made for each other. That arid, hard, waterless, treeless city, that frontage of glazed terra-cotta—what else was it but the clay-tablets of the new Imperialism, living and encroaching upon the quiet farmsteads of mellow birds and darkened timber that nestled under copse and sloping field?

Beautiful, too, were the folded uplands of the chalk hills, the Chilterns—would that our rulers might apply en masse for its Hundreds!—with their russet-carpeted beechwoods, and their dwellings of chequered brickwork, their flinten churches, their secluded peace. Beyond them, sloping copse and tilth sink gradually into the clayey revels of Middlesex, where market gardens alternate with mammoth structures of steel and concrete, brick and wrinkled iron larger than Christian cathedrals, the triumph and token of the new "civilisation." Truly, architecture, or the lack of it, is a great revealer of national character. Commercial blatancy has its structural as well as its linotypal expression, putting me in mind of a cook-boy in the English College at R me, who well observed that ove e grande la cittá, la bellezza non c'e.

In Paddington Station I rejoiced to find a few horse-drawn cabs still plying, the last brave protest of the old, unburied world against the Dionysiac orgies of speed-worship. This, too, will pass away. I repeat it with confidence. They laugh longest who laughs last. It is almost a truism now that modern industrialism will pass. But for many years my acquaintances shook their heads with compassion over my madness when I ventured to suggest that it would not be permanent. The superstition of absolute Progress dies hard, but it is mortally wounded.

And London itself? Truly, a theme for meditation. For the rich, who are also cultivated, it may well be an earthly paradise; they can still command all that urban civilisation can give: superb

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libraries, music, social intercourse, tasteful luxuries are still at beck and call. Still, but with increasing precariousness, for who does not hear the coming tempest, the ground-swell of an appalling revolution? A half-forgotten poet has well expressed it:

"Shame! shame on thee, City of Dens!— Thy rich are so rich, thy poor so perniciously poor: Shamed and shameless I know that our art, but thy sins Shall be laid like a plague-spotted corpse at the nation's door.

"For these are the hot-beds of fever, the pestilence breath; Here scrofula lurks and cholera stands at the gate; The portal is narrow and chill, but hungry as death, And beauty and riches and pomp and pride shall go in thereat.

"And one cometh a Cry—an upsurging out of the clay— And a man shall arise and smite the land with his rod, And the beasts shall come forth, swarm over, and slay and slay, And the leprous city be cleansed in a Jordan of blood."

> H. Cholmondeley-Pennell, Modern Babylon, in From Grave to Gay, p. 66. (1884).

It is only a corner of London that I shall see. The huge East End, Southwark and South London, the City—these are far without. But this corner is full of hurrying human tides. Quiet good humour and civil manners mark the thronging travellers by underground railway, omnibus and tramway. The ceaseless and complicated movement goes forward like a well-running machine. But there's the rub! The modern city populations have become not merely machines, but mere units of a machine, and the machine shows signs of strain, and threatens rupture. Newman warned his heedless contemporaries:—"Give a man a hundred eyes and hands for natural science, and you materially loosen his dependence on the ministry of Reason."* Worse still, as a late writer observes: "In other times man helped himself and ministered to his own necessities. One man could sail or row the boat, which he could also build, alone; he could also yoke his oxen and saddle his horse, or harness his camel, and go himself and carry his goods and his merchandise whither he would. He could write and copy his own books, build his own house, cut the wood for his own fire, and fill his own lamp with oil, but no one man alone can guide a steamship or run a railroad train, work a printing-press, mine his own coal or manufacture gas or electricity. To obtain the use and the advantages of all these things he is dependent on the labour and the knowledge of others, and, above all, on their goodwill. This is all very well as long as the mechanics, electricians, miners and workmen are there. But if they are not? . . . No civilisation that has ever existed has been so dependent on the motive power of human hands and the accord of human wills as ours. Therefore, if the hands and wills refuse to turn its wheels, and if instead, they destroy where they have wrought, our civilisation, even ours, may be like all the others which have gone before—wrecked and forgotten.† A great

machine is impressive only so long as it runs smoothly. But immortal beings should not resemble machines. It was a joy to escape from the grinding, throbbing nerve-wearing currents to Westminster Cathedral, whose austere and massive vaults* were majestic in darkness, while far beneath a few lights showed some two-score persons near the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament. London may well be proud of her Cathedral. No one loves the true Gothic more than I do, but no Catholic can keep his ears closed to the architectural speech of Rome and of Byzance. So much modern Gothic is bad, not because it is Gothic, but because it vainly tries to be. But this vast Cathedral is intensely living, and a splendid vesture of veined and royal marble is weaving for her piece by piece. She, too, has "the height, the space, the

gloom, the glory."

Early next morning, on the way to Tyburn, I saw the almond trees a-blossom on the fringes of Hyde Park and a faint, golden dawn from the distant lime-trees. Tyburn, of all shrines the most appealing to an English Catholic, the hidden Calvary of this gigantic city, the unrevealed Montmartre. Tyburn and Westminsterthese explain our hopes of England's eventual re-conversion. Tyburn, where Ireland's own martyr, soon, we trust, to be beatified, the Venerable Oliver Plunkett, won his crown. Tyburn, where lights perpetually burn for the conversion of England, where kneeling nuns make reparation day by day for the past and present horrors of the pride-drunken city, whose blaring lights would fain exclude the Light of the World. (In his Tale of Faith found in London, Wilfrid Reynell, a true lover of Ireland, has a noble prose poem to the altar-lights of London.) Oh, that horrible Babylon into which even daughters of Erin are lured by ostensibly high wages, perhaps also by the desperate morbid craze for garish modernity, lured, it is only too probable, in some cases to perdition, to the calm satisfaction of Ireland's enemies! Loathsome, Syren city, how false and tedious is thy refrain! How paltry they bedizen ment! Cannot religion, cannot patriotism, keep them at home! "Fly hence, our contact fear."

Tyburn and Westminster—the one suppliant for mercy, for grace, for deliverance; the other, anticipating the hoped-for triumph, the desired miracle. At Tyburn, too, some day shall rise a noble church when England turns at last from Mars and Mammon to the Cross, turns from her vulgar Empire-builders to seek the intercession of those, her sons, unknown and disregarded these weary centuries, who are, did she but know it, her sole true glory in modern ages, the three hundred and more who bowed no knee to Baal, and sealed their Faith with their blood.

Down yonder by the Thames lies waiting for death the priest to whom I have come to say farewell in this world, waiting the longed-for summons. Not many minutes have I the privilege of his converse. Of only one earthly matter do we speak—Ireland. He rejoices when I affirm my conviction that Ireland will emerge

^{*} University Sermons (1890), iv. 62.

[†] Mrs. Randolph Mordecai, Phases of Progress (1910), pp. 152-3.

^{*}In a letter, written about 1843 (given in his Life and Letters, by Fr. J. E. Bowden), Faber well says that austerity is the mother of beauty, and no other parentage is legitimate.

victorious to take up the work of St. Columba. That is his last farewell to earth. I receive his blessing, with a special blessing upon my humble efforts in Ireland's cause. And so with mutual promise of prayers we part, as for this world.

Never did I rejoice more thankfully in the rural peace of Plowden, in starry sky and wooded hill and quiet order than after this return from the tense delirium of Babylon. And I rejoiced

the more because I had seen my friend.

SPRING.

THERE came to me a song this evening,
A little trillet from glad days agone,
And every note so delicately spun,
You could have caught the feathery fluttering
Of pendant larks and butterflies awing,
The bourdon of a honey-bee upon
Ripe honeysuckle o'er the unison
Of meadow-music heard re-echoing.

But it was sadder still than it was sweet:

O, fond regrets, that sound thro' memoried joys
The happiness that comes not back forever!

And so, like flowers' suspirèd incense, fleet
As bird that hung in momentary poise,
My song wings back, a prayer, to its Good-Giver.

EDMUND B. FITZGERALD.

Paistin Fionn.*

By MARGARET CUNNINGHAM.

"O, Paistin Fionn, but it vexed her sore The day you turned from your mother's door, For the wide, grey sea and the strife and din That lie beyond where the ships go in."

"Her sad heart, loving and hoping on,
Awaits your footsteps from dark to dawn.
The thin cheeks paler and paler grow,
With hunger for you as the hours drift slow."

T the foot of Slieve Gullion, and bordering the little village of Dromintee, stands the cottage home of the MacManus family. The brilliant sunlight of a summer's eve falls like a rosy pall over the wide-spreading valleys that stretch for miles beyond the mountain slopes. Across the smiling face of nature the harbinger of evening lightly steps, leaving behind a peace and silence to record her passage. At the open door of her mountain home Bride MacManus appears, giving a living touch of colour to the quiet scene. Standing tall and slim upon the threshold, she presents a graceful picture, with hands shading her gaze from the glare, watching and listening for her mother's step. Into her dark eyes creeps a wistful look as she glances down the open road leading into the distant villages of Forkhill and Mullahbawn, sheltered by their purple hills. "Mother must have been delayed in Dundalk," she says aloud, unconsciously; "otherwise she would be home by now. Maybe she has waited for Pat O'Hegarty, for I saw him and his car pass by this morning on the way to town. I wish she would soon return, for it is lonely here without her." The evening stillness grows more pronounced, and seems to cast its spell upon the waiting girl as she relapses into silence. Her eyes stray round the familiar scenes, and a proud, glad light deepens in their depths, replacing the wistfulness of a moment before. From where she stands Slieve Gullion rears his lofty head, looking like a mighty sentry watching and guarding Bearna Uladh and the Ulster glens. The tales of childhood come crowding now upon the mind of Bride, and a glow of pride thrills her being as she claims for birthplace the spot where once the mighty forge of the valiant Culainn stood. She seems to feel the youthful spirit of Cuchulainn near, watching with his eagle eye the fortress of the master smith, and standing, with his sword in hand, ready to defend the Ulster Pass from all intruders. This mental picture of a glorious past fades away into the mists of time and is replaced by one of a later date. The stalwart young Finn of the Fianna bounds up the mountain slopes in pursuit of the fairy deer, and to Bride, the shouts of his illustrious comrades seem now to echo clearly down the hillside, as they follow in the chase to rescue their famous captain from the wiles of the mountain maid. So well have been the tales imprinted upon her mind by the village seanchaides, that the young girl has often traversed

^{*} This is a companion sketch to the story of "The Old Bog Road," which appeared in March Number.

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the historic mountain re-enacting in her vivid imagination the heroic scenes of a chivalrous age. Her glance now travels to the glens and valleys, dotted with their quaint, white homesteads, stretching away to where they meet the sea. Afar off, she sees the mighty waves roll and break upon Dundealgan's shores, that illustrious spot which cradled the young Setanta. Nearer to her view stands the belt of trees shading the tiny brook, sanctified and hallowed by the childish footsteps of her who became the "Mhuire of the Gael." As Bride gazes long at the sacred grove crowned by Faughart Mound, she thinks to herself how the saintly Brigid in her girlhood days must have loved the beauty of her childhood surroundings, which constantly reminded her of the

wonder and glory of Heaven's King.

"It is good to be alive on such an eve as this," the girl says aloud, with fervour, "and to claim this fair Irish heritage as one's own. Surely, no spot in Ireland can excel this wonderful panorama of hill and glen and sea. Oh, Ulster! they say you are proud and dark and stern. Proud you may be, and rightly so, but dark and stern—never. When, in the past, the Pale, like a serpent, cast its trail across the fertile Leinster plains, chilling the soul of Eire, you stretched forth your mighty arms and impeded its northern march, saying in your own proud tones: 'Thus far, and no further.' Or, again, when Ireland's hopes lay low, you raised aloft the fallen standard of the Gael, and infused your own daring courage into the drooping spirit of the nation by offering your noblest sons to stand in the breach and lead the cause of nationality, so often crushed by a ruthless hand, but never broken. Your roll of honour claims many a gallant heart, who helped to swell the lists of those who fought and fell for Rosheen Dhu. And now your enemies would deny your rightful place in the nation your sons have served so well, and rank you as a common shire of another country. But, Ulster! as Cuchulainn and Eoghan Ruadh and Aodh the Valiant stood in the gap and fought for you in the past, so the wily intrigues of those who hate you will wither away like a foul blast before those same mighty guardians of your Ulster Hills, for their spirit and nationality are very much abroad in the land to-day."

The girl's ardent sentiments of patriotism suddenly end as she hears the familiar sounds of Pat O'Hegarty's car approaching in the distance. As it draws nigh, she recognises her mother on the side seat, and leaving her position by the open door, hastens down the road to meet her. Pat O'Hegarty helps Mrs. MacManus to alight, and gives Bride some of her mother's purchases from the well of the car. He greets the girl in bantering tones, and drives away laughingly ere she has time to think of a witty rejoinder. Mrs. MacManus calls after him in a pleasant voice, but his only reply is a shake of his head and a flourish of his whip as he drives his horse carefully along the precipitous track that leads to his home. Bride and her mother walk across the narrow boreen and enter their little cottage. The latter is brimful of town news as her daughter sets the tea. While she sips the hot liquid she relates to Bride the events of the day, entering into the merest details, so dear to the heart of every country dweller unaccustomed to the ways of a busy town. When tea is finished she produces a parcel addressed to Mrs. MacNulty from her store

of goods, and asks the girl to bring it to the widow before late evening falls.

"Brideen, dear, Cáit may be expecting it, and I don't wish to disappoint her. She will be grateful to you for bringing it.

Besides, the walk across the hill will do you a world of good." "All right, mother," Bride replies. "I am glad to seize this opportunity of paying Cait a visit. It is a month now since I called upon her, and she must think it strange that neither of us

has been to see her lately.

Rising from her chair, the girl's deft fingers soon leave the room in its usual order. Then, putting a blue colleen cloak over ther light summer dress, she takes the parcel belonging to Mrs. MacNulty and sets out for the widow's cottage, which lies in a lonely hollow among the distant lowlands. As she steps along her thoughts wander to the solitary woman she is about to visit, and her generous heart goes out in sympathy to the widow, who endures her lot uncomplainingly, and without a murmur. "If only Eamonn would return," the girl muses, "to drive away the cloud of sadness that never seems to lift from his mother's face how hoppy she would be. It wrings my heart at times to see the hungry look in her eyes when his name is mentioned. It is now five years since he crossed his mother's door, and during all that time no letter has ever come to cheer her loneliness or banish the lines of sorrow which time has traced upon her countenance. A poor recompense her years of self-denial are now receiving for the way she idolised him in his youth and budding manhood. I never learned the reason why he left the glen so hurriedly, for his mother always kept the secret locked up within her breast. But, for his mother's sake, I wish his guardian angel would direct his wandering footsteps home, to gladden her tired eyes." On a rising hill the grey, stone church stands as a landmark, for the countryside around, and as the girl passes by a softly-breathed prayer issues from her lips for her kindred dead who sleep beneath the sod close by the shadow of the sanctuary. Down the quiet lanes she wends her way, the soft breezes from the south blowing gently across her face, and accompanying her along the path to the home of her friend.

As she approaches the open door sounds of a sweet, old Gaelic song come crooning from within. The golden sunset, shedding warm shafts of light upon the surrounding scenes, lights up the interior of the widow's cottage with a mellow radiance. On the threshold stone Bride stands in silence, listening to the tender words that come straight from the heart of the singer:

> "Siubhal, siubhal, siubhal a gradh. Nil leigheas le faghail acth leigheas an bhais, O dhag tú mise is bacht mo chas, Is go dteidh tú a mhuirnin slán."

Across the kitchen floor the girl's shadow falls, attracting the old woman's attention, and for Bride the spell of the music ends. With a glad smile upon her wrinkled face, Mrs. MacNulty hurries forward and bids her visitor an eager welcome. From her shoulders she removes the girl's cloak, and brings her best chair forward that Bride may seat herself.

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"Bride a chroidhe, you are as welcome as the heather in bloom. To me your bonnie face comes like a ray of sunshine to gladden my little home It does my poor old heart good to see

A happy smile ripples over the face of Bride at the kindliness

of the widow's tones, and she replies softly:

"Mother wasn't well lately, and extra work fell upon my shoulders. When evening time came round I always felt too tired to cross the hill, otherwise I would have called to see you sooner. To-day mother was in Dundalk, and she had a parcel home addressed to you which Patsy Murphy told her of, so I brought it across this evening lest you might be watching it."

"A thousand thanks, a mhilis," Mrs. MacNulty replies. "I'm very grateful to your mother for remembering to take it from Dundalk, and I'm glad to hear she is in her usual health again. To-day I was unable to go to town myself, and I wasn't sure if Patsy Murphy, on his way to the bog yesterday, had given my message to your mother. I had socks to make for blind Mary Cassidy's boy down the road, and they are not yet finished. Poor Mary! When I see how bravely she bears the sad affliction that has come upon her it gives me strength to bear my own little troubles. She is unable to do very little for herself now, and must depend on the neighbours for many kindnesses she may need."

"You are always thinking of others, dear Mrs. MacNulty," Bride remarks. "Such unselfishness must surely win immeasur-

able blessings."

A sigh escapes the widow's lips as she listens to the girl's words She questions Bride on her home affairs, and inquires about her brothers, who are now away. "Has your mother heard from Pat and Sean lately?" she asks.

"Yes," replies the girl. "A letter came from Pat a week ago, and he and Sean expect to be home in a fortnight's time. Sean has got promotion in his office, while Pat expects a transfer to the Dublin branch of his firm. Both are longing for a glimpse of their Ulster hills, and are looking forward to coming back again."

The girl's eager talk about her brothers shoots a pang of pain through the widow's heart. Her thoughts revert to her own absent son, whose whereabouts have been long a mystery, and the unshed tears glisten in her eyes as she sits, with folded hands upon her lap, in the mellow twilight.

Bride perceives at once the bitter heartache that attacks her listener, and her voice is low as she speaks of Eamonn's long

"Brideen, a stoir," replies the widow, "sometimes I think he will never return. The months and years are gliding by, and I often fear I'll go down to the grave without ever looking upon his face again. My Paistin Fionn! Many a long night I have lain awake calling on God to send him back, but He never seems to heed my prayer. Maybe, it is His punishment for all I thought of my wayward lad. And yet, that cannot be; for His Own Blessed Mother loved Him with a wealth of tenderness, beside which our own poor affections sink into nothingness in comparison. Like the remainder of the neighbours, you must have often wondered, Bride, why Eamonn went away without bidding you farewell, but his heart was sore at the harsh things uttered, and

he had no desire to speak to any of the villagers. Though lovable to a fault, he was high-spirited and proud, and would brook no interference in his affairs, even from his own father. Poor Pat is now in his quiet grave, so I'll not discuss the dead. Yet, I often think if he had shown more leniency in dealing with his son, Eamonn would be here to-day. His father wished him to marry Rose MacSweeney, from Clohogue district. She had a tidy fortune, but Eamonn refused to carry out his father's wishes. He had no affection for the girl, for his heart was centred on Máirin Cullinane, from Mullahbawn, and he told his father so. A stormy scene ensued. Hot, passionate words were uttered that drove the lad away in bitter anger, and ere he went he swore he would never darken the threshold of his home while his father was alive. Too well, mavrone, has he kept his vow. In the bitter aftertime poor Pat regretted the bitter scene, and on his dying bed he craved in vain to se his son to win forgiveness. From that day out no tidings ever reached me from the lad. With his empty pocket, he was too proud to marry Máirin Cullinane, and maybe, like many another he has drifted, and been whirled under the sea of life if fate has proved too strong."

"Don't lose hope," Bride replies. "Something tells me he may yet return. And poor Máirin Cullinane. Many a time I wondered at the far-away expression in her thoughtful eyes, and why she refused Seumas Hearty when he offered her his hand. But now I understand the cause. Well, dear Mrs. MacNulty, I'll respect your confidence, and pray fervently that God may send you back the wanderer. Who knows, but Our Blessed Lady may work a favour on your behalf. I must now say beannacht leat, for I see the mists creeping down Slieve Gullion; and if I don't bestir myself, the Cailleach Biorra may step out of her mountain cairn, and whirl me away in her magic clasp."

Her hopeful words lighten the heart of her listener, and as she leaves the little home the widow's gaze lingers upon her retreating figure until a bend of the hill hides her from her view. Bride hastens along as twilight deepens, exchanging many a cheery greeting with the stray wayfarers she meets on the way. At the church door she halts, stepping inside to make a hurried visit. The red glow of the sanctuary lamp glimmers faintly, casting fitful shadows upon the walls of the little building. A few silent worshippers are intent on prayer, and pay no heed to the girl's entrance. Bride kneels down, her wandering glance straying to a stranger who is kneeling by. Something in the poise of his head and the waving hair arrests her attention, driving into momentary forgetfulness the motive which led her within the church. Her heart beats quickly as her wondering brain tries to locate him in her memory. "It cannot be," she says to herself, "and yet how like he is to the fair-haired lad I used to know." From her pocket she takes her beads and begins to tell her Rosary. Occasionally her eyes wander to the young stranger, who seems absorbed in prayer. Eventually, he rises from his knees, and goes quietly out of the little church. Bride watches him intently, and a look of certainty passes across her face as she scans his features closely. With a final prayer upon her lips she genuflects reverently before the Blessed Sacrament and leaves the building, following in the wake of the young stranger. Outside the church he stands,

with a pre-occupied look in his eyes. As Bride draws near he lifts them in her direction, and gazes long and earnestly into her countenance. Bride can no longer endure the silence and speaks, with an excited thrill in her voice: "Is it Eamonn MacNulty come home at last?" A surprised expression dawns in the stranger's eyes as he replies: "Surely, you are not Bride MacManus, the little girl I used to know some years ago?"

"I am, indeed," Bride responds. "But you have not answered my question. Yet there is no need, for I recognised you in the church. Oh, Eamonn! why did you stay away so long to wound so deeply your mother's heart? From the day you left the village she has never ceased to grieve in silence pining for

your absence."

"Bride, tell me about my mother," Eamonn says, his voice trembling with emotion. "Only recently have I learned about my father's death. You must know the reason now why I left my native hills. In those distant days I was young and headstrong, and should have shown patience in reasoning with my

father. But wishes are futile now."

"I am just returning from your mother, Eamonn, and the old place is still the same as it was in your boyhood days. She told me her daily prayer was that God might send you back. He has withheld the wish of her heart for many years, but maybe it has been to prove how steadfast was her faith in Him. Her prayer is granted now, and you will be a comfort and a blessing to her in her declining years, I hope. There is another, also, Eamonn, who will rejoice at your return. And now, a chara, hurry home, for I'll not deprive your mother an instant longer of the happiness that awaits her."

"God bless you, Bridie," Eamonn replies; "I am unworthy of such constancy and love. When my home-coming is over with my mother and Máirin, I'll tell you all my experience since I left my Ulster glens, and why I have returned now so unexpectedly. Till then I'll bid you beannacht leat, and may your dearest hopes ever win fruition for your kind welcome to a lonely wanderer."

With a warm handclasp they separate—Eamonn hastening down the hill to his mother's home, while Bride hastens on in the gathering dusk, her heart singing a glad Te Deum for the widow, whose face shall lose for ever now the shadow that for long has lain upon it.

APRIL.

HOU green-clad beauty of the years, Whose sun shines through a rain of tears, No wonder that all hearts you win, So Irish is the mood you're in-Weeping for a past of sorrow, Smiling for a bright to-morrow!

M. BARRY O'DELANY.

Mount St. Bernard and its Monks.

By J. B. CULLEN.

HE name of Mount St. Bernard, and the works of charity to which the monks of its hospice devote themselves recall memories of the Ages of Faith, which, however, in this case, survive and have lost nothing of their first freshness—after a period of almost a thousand years. Throughout the Christendom of to-day there are few religious institutions more universally known—whether from the experience of travellers on the Continent, or from the pages of descriptive history—than the Alpine monastery of Mount St. Bernard. Nor is poetry wanting to immortalise its fame in the domain of literature. To many of our most gifted bards this storied spot has supplied themes and inspirations for verse and song. Who fails to remember the stanzas of Longfellow's poem:—

> "At break of day, as heavenward The pious monks of St. Bernard Uttered the oft-repeated prayer A voice cried through the startled air Excelsior!

A traveller, by the faithful hound, Half-buried in the snow was found, Still grasping in his hand of ice That banner, with the strange device,

Although commonly spoken of as such, it will appear to many of our readers, a strange fact that there is no mountain which bears the name of St. Bernard. Like that of St. Gothard, the name is given only to the "Pass." Neither has the title any connection with the name or personality of the twelfth century Reformer of ecclesiastical discipline, and preacher of the Second Crusade—the great St. Bernard of Clairvaux. The founder of the world-famed monastery of the Alps was another Bernard, a native

of Savoy, of whom we shall speak later on.

As travellers who have been to Switzerland will remember, the Vale of Chamounix is a favourite starting point for those who desire to undertake an ascent to Mount Blanc or to Mount St. Bernard. The usual approach to the latter is made by the road from Chamounix to Martigny (a dull little town on the banks of the Rhone above the head of Lake Geneva), the route to Mount St. Bernard branching off to the right at Forclaz, and descending the open hill-sides near Bouvernier till Orsiers is reached. This was the line of March taken by the army of Napoleon when crossing the Alps in May, 1800. It was then, however, but a forest-path among rocks and roots of pine trees, and presented

the greatest difficulties he experienced in transporting his artillery through the defile. The modern road cut along the precipices that overhang the Dranse affords an easy ascent till the plateau of Proz is reached, where, amidst the shelter of the surrounding mountains, flocks and herds find abundance of rich herbage. From this point the view is lovely—the vast patch of green pasture-land, the chalets and groups of browsing cattle forming an unexpected feature in a scene completely locked in on every side by mountains, clothed with everlasting snow and by glistening glaciers—whence innumerable cataracts and seething streams descend to the gorges and valleys of the low-lands. The carriage road ceases a little beyond the plain of Proz, whence the journey to the monastery of St. Bernard is made by path and occupies about two with snow.

The Hospice is situate on the very crest of the "pass," and occupies an altitude of 8,130 feet above the level of the sea. This dwelling in the clouds stands on a point of elevation exceeding in height almost three times that of any mountain in Ireland. The building is of massive stone,: and is exposed to tremendous storms from the south-east and the north-west. On the northwest it is somewhat sheltered by the Mont Mort and in the opposite direction by Mont Chenalettaz. The principal building is capable of accommodating eighty or a hundred travellers with beds, but it is possible to shelter upwards of three hundred persons if necessity should arise, while there are instances of double the number having received assistance in a single day. In addition to this building there is an auxiliary house called Hotel St. Louis, erected as a place of refuge in case of fire—an event that has happened more than once. The ground-floor of the main edifice is used as a store-house, and as well affords stabling accommodation. A massive flight of steps leads up to the principal entrance on the first floor, whence a long corridor connects the domestic apartments with the chapel. On the next story a corridor again leads to the refectory, dormitories and gallery of the church, which is appropriated to strangers or visitors to the monastery. Off the stairs commanding this floor is a large Reception Room, where ladies and other guests are entertained by the community. Here the Bursar of the monastery usually presides at dinner and supper, at the hours of 11.30 a.m. and 6 p.m. respectively. Gentlemen, however, usually dine and sup with the monks in their own refectory.

From the extensive and varied grades of accommodation provided by the Monks of St. Bernard it will be easily realised that the monastery is not—as many think—merely a place to be visited through curiosity by tourists and travellers on account of the romantic interest attached to it, existing as it does from the Middle Ages, since when it has been a fruitful theme of description with travellers, novelists and poets. On the contrary, this institution discharges manifold functions not only of charity, but of great utility and public benefit. The Pass of St. Bernard, it must be remembered, is a much frequented thoroughfare, being the chief means of intercourse between several cantons of Switzerland and Alpine settlements of France. Strange to say, the time of year during which the greatest number of travellers pass over the moun-

tain is during the months of November, February, March and April. In the more severe of those months, sometimes, as many as 2,000 pedestrians monthly have been known to go by, for, at this season the poorer inhabitants of the villages, in the lowlands, set out to seek work in remote districts, returning, like the Irish harvesters, in November, when they bring back their earnings to their isolated homes. One and all of those wayfarers claim hospitality of the hospitable monks, and are ever welcome to food and shelter. These, when they come to a building lying at some distance below the summit, are desired to wait till the following morning, when a lay brother, accompanied by a dog, descends from the Hospice to guide them up to the monastery. It appears the dog never misses his way, but, entirely hidden in the snow, except his tail, directs the route of the travellers to the summit. The thrilling stories so often told of the monks going out in search of lost travellers have no foundation, since this would be wholly impossible owing to the risks and dangers that would attend any attempt of the kind. This assertion must not, however, destroy with any of our readers the poetic charms of Longfellow's verses. Needless to tell, unfortunate travellers frequently suffer from the hardships of their toilsome journey. Frozen limbs and more serious experiences are of frequent occurrence. When the monks meet cases of this kind the frozen parts are rubbed strongly with snow, and that failing, stimulating ointments are applied. If neither treatment succeeds the frostbitten limbs are at once amputated by one of the brethren, who is skilled in surgery. Stockings and warm clothing, when needed, are given to the poor. Nothing, in fact, that human charity could devise is left undone by the "Good Samaritans" of Mount St. Bernard.

The labour of the dogs, we are told, is so constant and trying that, notwithstanding the care bestowed on them, they seldom live over nine years, when the poor animals succumb to the effects of rheumatism—to which ailment man and beast alike are subject in

these regions of perpetual snow.

The system by which the purveyance, or necessary supplies for the monastery are provided is interesting. Wood for firing is one of the most important items, since it is in requisition at all times of the year. Not a tree grows within miles around. The monks are obliged to keep some fifty horses all the year through for the cartage of timber—which can be performed only for about two months in summer. This is mainly brought from the Forest of Val Ferrex, which is part of the property of the monastery. The whole establishment is kept perpetually heated by means of hotair stoves. Owing to the extreme of temperature, water boils here at about 190 degrees, which is much less favourable for cooking (meat especially), which takes almost double the time required in a less elevated atmosphere. In summer fresh meat is supplied from the valleys, but in winter salted viands are alone available. A number of cows are kept during summer at the Hospice for milk, and the production of butter and cheese. Later on in the year these are removed to the house of the Order in Martigny, whence the supplies are sent up to Mount St. Bernard.

Despite the disadvantages and inconveniences consequent on the situation of the monastery—all contingencies are so admirably provided for, that the wants of those who through necessities of life or on errands of pleasure or travel, visit the place, are amply cared for.

It is difficult to imagine the excess of human sacrifice which the vocation of a religious of Mount St. Bernard must involve. Acts of charity in one of its most extreme ideals is the only variety of their existence—with the certainty of an enfeebled constitution, resulting from the severity of the climate to which their calling exposes them. Few weeks of the year pass without a fall of snow. In the altitude of the monastery it always freezes in the morning, and it is rarely for three months together the immediate surroundings are free from deep snow—the average depth is seven or eight feet, but many times a year the drifts accumulate to over forty

As a rule the members of the community are young men who enter on their religious career at about eighteen years of age. Few are able to stand the climate for more than eighteen years, but there is no stated period for which they devote their lives. Each remains as long as he is able—being allowed fifteen days at a time—twice a year—for recreation, which is usually spent in the suffragan house at Martigny, whither also they retire when their health fails, and they become unfit to fulfil the arduous duties of the Hospice of Mount St. Bernard.

For a visit on a summer holiday Mount St. Bernard affords a delightful experience—never to be forgotten. Nothing can exceed the kind and courteous attention of the monks. In the reception room, to which we have before alluded, one is reminded in the surroundings of the many distinguished visitors who from time to time shared the hospitality of the community. Here is a piano, the gift of the late King Edward VII. of England, when he was Prince of Wales, and an harmonium, presented by the celebrated composer, Blumenthal. Adjoining this apartment is a museum, containing collections of plants, insects and minerals peculiar to the Alps, together with some interesting relics of the Temple of Jupiter, which in Pagan times stood close to the site of the Monastery. These antiquities consist of votive tablets, bronze figures, arms, coins, and personal ornaments, which are curiously illustrative of the early intercourse that must have e isted in this Pass in pre-Christian times. The Temple has wholly disappeared, but the steps cut in the solid rock which led up to it may still be seen.

The Church of the Monastery has not much pretentions to architecture or ornament. Yet it is imposing in its appearance of solemnity. It contains the tomb of General Dessaix, who fell at Marengo. The monument was erected by Napoleon.

The Morgue is a spot of melancholy interest at Mount St. Bernard. Here the bodies of those who perish in the storms and the frequent avalanches that occur in the mountains are placed. The remains when found are usually in a frozen condition, and are deposited in the Morgue—in the position in which they have been discovered. From the rapid evaporation at the high atmosphere they dry up without the usual decay. On some of the bodies the clothes remain for years and years. It appears the rocky and frozen soil prevents the possibility of even burying the dead; and a further reason for keeping the corpses thus petrified

is the chance of recognition in case the unfortunate victims should be sought for by their relatives.

A few words regarding the founding of the Hospice of Mount St.

Bernard must bring our essay to a close.

There is historical evidence to show that a religious institution was established on the spot for the succour and aid of travellers before the middle of the ninth century. By some, the foundation of this first Hospice is attributed to Louis le Debonnaire; others, however, refer to it as one of the philanthropic works of Charlemagne. A century I ter it ceased seemingly to fulfil the pious object for which it was founded, possibly from the lessening of the royal patronage after the division of the empire of Charlemagne among his sons. Be this as it may, the present Hospice was erected in the year 962 by Bernard, the scion of a noble family of Savoy, whose home was the Chateau of Menthon, on the border of the Lake of Annency. Early in his youth this remarkable man resolved to devote his life to religion, and entered the College of Aosta to study for the priesthood. His great piety and talents won for him universal esteem, and eventually he was raised to the dignity of Archdeacon of the Cathedral Chapter of Aosta.

(To be continued.)

Ordination of Passionist Students.

ST. ANNE'S CHURCH, Sutton, St. Helens, Lancashire, is one specially dear to the members of the Passionist Congregation, as in the crypt repose the remains of the Venerable Father Dominic, of the Mother of God, and Father Ignatius Spencer, whose heroic labours for the Faith have made their names household words.

On last Ember Saturday, near the tombs of these saintly sons of St. Paul of the Cross, twelve Passionist students were raised to the dignity of the priesthood, and thus were enabled to enter on the great apostolate of preaching Christ Crucified. The officiating prelate was Most Rev. Dr. Whiteside, Archbishop of Liverpool; who was assisted by Very Rev. Father John, C.P., Provincial, Archdeacon; Very Rev. Father Isidore, C.P., Rector, Deacon; Rev. Father Wilfrid, C.P., Sub-Deacon; Rev. Father Oswald, C.P., and Rev. Father Gerald, C.P., Masters of Ceremonies. The newly-ordained were assisted during the Mass by Rev. Father Coffey, C.S.Sp.; Rev. Father Cleary, C.S.Sp.; Rev. Father Brennan, M.A.; Rev. Father Eugene, C.P.; Rev. Father Honorius, C.P.; and Rev. Father Gregory, C.P.

Reserved places were occupied in the church by the parents and relatives of the young priests, and members of the Communities of Notre Dame, Mercy and Passionist Sisterhoods were

present.

The names of the newly-ordained Passionists are:—Rev. Father Dermot (Cronin), Rev. Father Frederick (Matthews), Rev. Father Leonard (McCabe), Rev. Father Leo (Gribben), Rev. Father Michael (Palmer), Rev. Father Denis (Cruden), Rev. Father Peter (Lafferty), Rev. Father Dunstan (Geoghegan), Rev. Father Fintan (O'Beirne), Rev. Father Patrick (Aylward), Rev. Father Casimir (Birkett), and Rev. Father Pius (Carolan).

Reviews.

"BY STRANGE PATHS." By Annie M. P. Smithson. Dublin: The Talbot Press, Ltd. 6s. net.

Most of us are familiar with the story of Dr. Johnson and the book which caused him to get up before his usual hour. I regret to say that it is a good while since the desire to continue a certain volume was the means of my anticipating the alarm clock, but recently such an experience has come to me again. "By Strange Paths" is a compelling novel. One feels that he must follow the heroine through to the end-not perhaps that she is such a marvellous heroine so much as the fact that her life is limned for us in such a vivid way, with such a touch of genius behind the pen that depicted the scenes for us, that the interest is sustained to the very last page. Miss Smithson is, without doubt, a novelist with a future before her; she gives one the impression that every scene with which she deals was there in cold reality before her as her pen travelled over sheet after sheet—one would hazard the guess that not a few of these pages are veiled autobiography. The chapters that deal with hospital life are particularly realistic, though a journal devoted to nursing has attacked the book on the ground that it conveys an unfair idea of hospital regulations and practice. But, after all, the novelist can claim a little licence—what one amongst all the scenes and characters depicted by Dickens is without a trace of exaggeration? Yet on every page the authoress has set a seal of reality: those people who pass before us are real folk—one seems to remember having met several of them.

I started to read the book in a fault-finding mood, and had actually decided on making a note of errors. But almost at once I became absorbed in the story to the exclusion of petty thoughts about trifling slips in the work; absorbed, because Miss Smithson writes with such confident knowledge, so sure a touch, that one follows her without thought of query. Save, indeed, once or twice. That scene where the woman is dying in the tenement (Chap. 8) is not true of Catholic Ireland—one gathers that our authoress is a recent convert to Catholicity. And can the "Church of Ireland" own a minister capable of making such an unappropriate remark as that attributed to the Rev. Mr. Wilson, on page 156? Miss Smithson's hard-hearted folk are very icy, indeed.

The blemishes in the book are trifles, scarce worth noting: its merits are such that a very large public should be found discussing it. Miss Smithson wields a compelling pen, and I for one shall be more than anxious to read the next volume which she gives to the world. Hers is a personality to be reckoned with in the future of Irish literature.

T. K.

"THE PRIEST OF ISIS," ETC. By ETHNA KAVANAGH.

London: John Long, Ltd.

Readers of The Cross, who are already acquainted with the cultured and delightful contributions of this talented poetess, will gladly welcome this work. The striking poem that gives its title

to the book is a powerful satire on the false faith of those whose dupes believe what its priest, "the wretchedest man under Egypt's sky," well knows is only a deception. The volume includes some charming lines—"To a Child found clasping a Doll in an Egyptian Tomb," "Slieveroe," and "The Ascent of Calvary." We feel sure there will be an eager demand for this attractive addition to present-day literature.

"SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF SIR THOMAS MORE."
By Sister Mary Berchmans. Dublin: The Talbot Press.

This pretty little play, of one act and four scenes, should be popular in Ireland, the home of the ancestors of Blessed Thomas More. Even Chelsea, his English home, is full of Irish associations. John Philpot Curran died there, John Banim lived in the house for a time, in souvenir of Curran; Daniel Maclise also died in Chelsea, and Justin MacCarthy and Lady Wilde were also Chelsea residents. Before the Catholic Church of St. Mary's was opened in Cadogan Street, we are told in Faulkner's "History of Chelsea," that the Catholics of the neighbourhood, among whom special mention is made of "the poor, destitute Irish," were unable to go to Mass on Sunday. Again, a French authority, writing in 1811, tells how the poor Catholics of Chelsea, who were mainly Irish—la plupart Irlandaise—were allowed to die without the Sacraments because there was no Catholic priest in the place. When his son-in-law, Roper, exulted in the happy state of a realm governed by so zealous and Catholic a prince as Henry the Eighth, More, who knew the King well, answered: "I pray God that some of us may not live to see the day in which all this will be changed, and in which we will be glad to be permitted to possess our own churches and our own religion in peace." More's distrust of the unworthy master he served so well glimmers in the opening scene, and is more than justified in the second, which closes with the arrest of the saintly chancellor.

"SONGS OF THE ISLAND QUEEN." By Peadar Mac Tomais. Dublin: The Talbot Press; London: T. Fisher Unwin. 1s. net.

In his foreword to this fascinating little work the author tells us that if he has chosen the saddest songs of the "Island Queen" it is because those sung in the hour of her adversity have ever been the sweetest. Nevertheless, in no one of the poems that form this little volume does the sorrowful note ever sink so low as to be mistaken for despair, nor rise so high as to drown the voice of faith in a brighter future.

"Winter is gone, and a Springtime rune
Through the teeth of the wind is blown,
Like a voice from the tombs of our coffinless dead
That heralds an Easter dawn."

The beautiful verses, "After Vinegar Hill," would alone entitle the author to a high place whether in poetry or patriotism.

oreas caince.

Aine-Cao é vo mear an an 5Cumann nua ro atá cunta an bun le véanaí?

Cáit—Cao é an cumann é? Ceapar 50 paib án noótain agur bheir de cumannaib aguinn i nÉipinn 5an aon ceann nua do cun an bun.

A.—Cumann Opíve ir ainm vó azur vo cuipeav ap bun é cun thova in azarv na brairiún nzallva a tazann cuzainn ón frainne ir ó Sarana azur a bíonn va zeleactú az mnáiv na hÉipeann.

C.— Oubant 50 haib bheir cumainn inéininn ac ní veinim apír é. Tá 5á 5éan le cumann ven trópt ran asur tá rúil le Via

azam zo n-éineocaió leir zo zeal.

Δ.—Τάιμ-γε αρ αοη ιητίηη τεατ. Τά αη σοηαγ αρ κασ αρ συν σεγ ηα πηάιδ τε σέαηαί. δίοσαρ σοηα 50 τεορ ροιώ αη σοδαό ας τάιο γεας η-μαίρε πίογ μεαγα αποίγ. δίοηη ηάιρε ορω δειτ ας κέας αιπτ αρ συνο ασα.

C.—Πιό πας ιοηζηαό. Το γαοιτρεά αρ α τάη ας α το ραβασαρ ξά ηξιέαρύ τέιη σ'α οη ξηό cun πάιρε σο cup αρ δαοιηιό ειτε, ας συί το στί αη ταιτριοη τέιη ηί cuipeann γιασ το τεορ εασαιζ ορτά.

ā.—An cuala tú an puo a dein an tatain Éamonn leo pan bpanóirte tian?

C.—Mion cuata, Cao a bein ré?

C.—Μο ζοιμπ έ! 1ς τρυαζ πά σειπεαπη ζας γαζαρτ απίλιο. Θά πσέαητασ ηί βεασ αση ζά te Cumann θρίσε ταρ έις ταπαιιτίη, αζυς σο βεασ mear αζ mnάιβ πα ηθιρεαπη ορτα τέιη ις αρ πα σαοιπε σεαγα μαις το στάιπιζ ρόπρα. Πί βεισίς παρ ατάισ τέ τάταις αζοέαπαμ αιτρις άρ mnάιβ mattuiξτε Śαγαπα αζυς πα

Fnaince.

Á.—Ir rión duic, a Cáic. So deusaid dia ciall dóib ir dúinn so léin ir so n-éinse so seal le Cumann Unive.

C.—Amen, a Cizeanna!

muiris na mona.



A Literary Circle for Young Readers of "The Cross."

Conducted by FRANCIS.



RULES OF THE GUILD.

- I. The Guild of Blessed Gabriel is a literary circle open to boys and girls under 18 years of age.
- II. The members will be expected to spread devotion to Blessed Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows, by practising the virtues of purity, charity, and truth, and by living lives worthy of him who is to be their model and their guide.
- III. They will at all times observe the conditions under which the competitions will be held.
- IV. They will endeavour to bring as many new members as they can into the Guild of Blessed Gabriel.

O you feel the sweet hope and gladness and beauty of Easter in your hearts this morning. I think there is no season so full of peace and real joy as the one that tells of the raising up of mankind from the hopeless depths to the sun-kissed heights of freedom—the one that brings to our mind the greatest Sacrifice and the noblest Act of Love that the world has ever known, or will ever know. It is the glamour of that Sacrifice that gives a fairer brightness to the sun, and a sweeter note to the songs of the birds, a richer fragrance to the flowers, and a warmer glow to the hope that lies in every heart that is pure. May the blessings of Easter be in the hearts and homes of every young friend of Francis, and may He who gave His Heart's Precious Blood for all of us, watch over and guide and guard them through all the days of all the years to be!

MY POST BAG.

Isn't it wonderful that, no matter what may be the season or the circumstances, I am never left without a good, big, fat bundle of letters? And they are such helpful, cheery messages that my heart glows with pleasure as I read them, and the warmth of it stays with me until the day for opening my post bag comes again. Every month there are newcomers whose letters are very welcome, but the old friends gladden me beyond all telling, for every letter of theirs is an expression of loyalty and devotedness. Lilian Nally gives unstinted praise to the poems of Rita and Nina Carlos. She says they are just beautiful in thought and execution, and reflect minds and hearts of which our land may well feel proud. I agree with every word she says, and I can assure her that her words of praise may be as many and as generous as she wishes, because our two young Western friends will not be spoiled by honest praise. Rita Carlos sends another poem which will be read with genuine pleasure.

By the River.

When dewy eve reigned on her throne
We gazed upon the water weeds;
The piercing note of the wild duck's moan
Was heard by the river, sad and lone
As the rippling wavelets' drowsy drone
Crooned to the hollow reeds.

A green leaf floated down the stream,
The zephyrs heaved a soft, soft sigh.
The daisy closed her eye to dream
On the sedgy bank; the sun-god's gleam
To dazzle the dying day did seem
As we wandered, you and I.

When we stand by the Corrib's bank no more
And our ways are far apart,
'Mid the dreams life gives to your fancy's store
Keep a place for the magic days of yore,
And the flowers that Springtime spread before
Simplicity of heart.

Rita Carlos.

I was very glad to get a letter from our honorary member, B. M. O'Neill, but I regret to have to say that her verses are not as good as others from her pen that have been published in the Guild. She hasn't yet caught the spirit of Spring. Perhaps next month will find her in happier mood. Frances Matthews writes me a very nice letter on behalf of all our members in the Presentation Convent, Drogheda. She and her companions are preparing for a big Feis that is to come off in July, and are working hard. Go n-eighre leo. They are also looking forward to the Canonisation of Blessed Gabriel. All the young people should pray hard to him during the next couple of months, and he will surely remember them on the day that his sweet name is added to the Calendar of the Saints. And when they pray to Blessed Gabriel I trust they will not forget the spiritual needs of poor old Francis. Do chuir cailin beag o Bheulfeirode. Treasa Nic Mhaghnuis liter ana dheas i nGaedhilg chuham. Is maith an cailin igan amhras. Brendan F. O'Brien is a new member from near Loughrea, and he is heartily welcome. He writes a trifle carelessly, but I am sure the mere fact of a gentle reminder will make him pay more attention to that part of his work in future. Margaret Goudie sends me an artistic greeting card for St. Patrick's Day and a sweet little letter along with it. I am very grateful, and I wish her many happy returns of the day: Two girls from Cavan-Mona Brady and Susan Fitzpatrick-desire to join our ranks and become regular contributors to the Guild. I need hardly say they are welcome I trust to hear from them every month in future. Peter Casey wants to know the Irish form of his name. It is Peadar O Cathasaigh. Thanks for St. Patrick's Day Cards to Josie Kernan, P. Mullally, Dick O'Reilly, Maire Ni Chuinn and Willie Dolan.

IMPORTANT

(1) All newcomers will please write a personal note to Francis, apart from their competition papers, asking to be admitted to membership of the Guild. (2) Always put your name and address on your competition paper, whether you send a letter or not. (3) Orders for Copies of "The Cross" and all other business letters are to be addressed to the Manager.

THE AWARDS

I.—Members over 12 and under 18 years.

The prize offered for the best telling in the competitor's own words, of an incident in Irish History is awarded to Nora Corry, Presentation Convent, Drogheda. Good essays were sent by Brigid Lynch, Brendan F. O'Brien, Kathleen O'Reardon (it was not necessary to send stamps), Seosaimhin Nic Chathmhaoil, Monica Kierans, Kitty Mathews, Margaret Goudie, Mona Brady and Susan Fitzpatrick.

II. Members under 12 years.

The prize for the best specimen of School Work is awarded to Donncha O Fogartaigh, 12 College View Terrace, Millbourne Avenue, Drumcondra, Dublin. All the work sent in was good.

MAY COMPETITIONS

I. For Members over 12 and under 18 years of age.

A handsome Prize is offered for the best essay on "Maytime."

II. —For Members under 12 years of age.

A handsome Prize is offered for the best letter to Francis on "May Devotions."

PRIZE ESSAY.

The Siege and Capture of Drogheda.

There are many towns in Ireland which, if they could but speak, would have sad histories to relate. Drogheda, the ancient town which commands the entrance to the River Boyne, ranks almost first. Its very walls and ruins speak to us, as nothing else can of its sad fate in 1649, when Cromwell and his army first set foot in Ireland.

Having landed in Dublin with an army of 9,000 foot and 4,000 horse some months previously, he proceeded to Drogheda. This was the passport to the northern towns, and being situated opposite England it afforded the most direct communication between the two countries. It was garrisoned by Ormond with 3,000 troops, chiefly English, under Sir Arthur Aston. The town was also well fortified, being enclosed by a large wall, part of which still exists. Being very strong, it had to be battered with cannon for two days before a breach was made. The order was then given to storm the town, but the work proved harder than they had imagined. The garrison fought with extreme courage, and twice, after forcing their way into the town, the storming parties were beaten back through the breach. The third time Cromwell led them in person, forced Aston back, and before night became master of the town.

Cromwell issued an order that the life of neither man, woman, nor child should be spared, and he was determined to carry it through. A body of 3,000 men was totally destroyed and massacred. Sir Arthur Aston was among the first who fell.

As every part of the town was commanded from Millmount, further resistance was hopeless. The assailants passed through the two breaches and were soon in possession of the north side. Then began the indiscriminate slaughter which made the name of the Protector one of execration throughout Ireland. We cannot imagine the cruelty with which these innocent people were treated. Many of them fled to St. Peter's Church, then Catholic, and shut themselves up there for safety, but, alas, they were only too soon discovered and driven out at the sword's point. The street leading to St. Peter's Church retained the name of "Bloody" Street from the blood of those slain which, as tradition states, formed a regular stream in this street. The following days the towers were visited, but those inside refused

to yield. In the end, however, they submitted, being forced by hunger. Numbers of them were killed, and the rest were shipped off to the Barbadoes as slaves. When the town was captured no mercy was shown to anyone. The property of the citizens became the loot of the Parliamentary troops. Thus ended the awful

Although that time has long passed, the shattered ruins, and the breaches made by the cannon in the wall, still remain to remind us of what our forefathers endured

in the awful year of 1649.

Nora Corry.

Competitors will please remember the following rules:—All competition papers must be certified by some responsible person to be the unaided and original work of the sender. They must have attached to them the coupon to be found in this issue (one coupon will be sufficient for all the members of a family). They must be sent so as to reach the office of "The Cross" not later than April 12. All letters to be addressed: Francis, c/o "The Cross," St. Paul's Retreat, Mount Argus

Passionist Missions and Retreats.

Missions and Retreats will be given after Easter by the Passionist Fathers at the following places:—Letterkenny, Ligoniel, Belfast; Ballybrack, Dublin; Whitehouse, Belfast; Strabane, Murlog; Holy Cross, Belfast; Ballycastle, Co. Antrim; Guilford,; Mount Argus, Dublin; Ballinlea, Laurencetown, Glencullen, Sandyford, St. Paul's, Arran Quay, Dublin; Duncan Terrace, London; Harborne, Birmingham; Ballintoy, Co. Antrim; Abergavenny, Birnie Knowe, Auchinleck, Polmont, Edinburgh, Deane, Bolton;

St. Paul's Church, Mount Argus.

Maunday Thursday, 10 a.m., High Mass and Procession to the Altar of Repose; 8 p.m., Mandatum or Washing of the Feet;

Sermon by Rev. Father Basil, C.P.

Good Friday, 10 a.m., Mass of the Presanctified and Adoration of the Cross. Sermon by Rev. Father Adrian, C.P. 3 p.m., Stations of the Cross. Sermon by Rev. Father Berchmans, C.P. 7 p.m., Devotions of the Three Hours' Agony. Sermons on the Seven Words of Our Lord on the Cross, by Very Rev. Father Francis, C.P.; Very Rev. Father Sebastian, C.P.; Rev. Father Kieran, C.P.; Rev. Father Joseph, C.P.; Rev. Father Colman, C.P.; Rev. Father Xavier, C.P., and Rev. Father Columban, C.P.

Mission.—A fortnight's Mission will be opened on Sunday, April 11th, by Rev. Father Richard, C.P.; Rev. Father Xavier,

C.P.; and Rev. Father Adrian, C.P.

FEAST OF ST. PAUL OF THE CROSS.—Sunday, May 2. Solemn High Mass at 12. The panegyric of the Saint will be preached by

